

value for tracts of land that may be remote, undevelopable, depleted, largely unmarketable to private buyers—or all of the above. Appraising such land is a wholly different task from pricing a farm, homestead or business based on recent sales of comparable properties.

This doesn't excuse the agencies' worst flubs, of course, but it does argue for some tolerance in reviewing their overall performance—3 million acres of unwanted federal land traded, since 1989, for 2 million desirable acres whose acquisition protected habitat, improved recreation, consolidated fragmented holdings, buffered parks or wilderness from incompatible development. The GAO has carefully measured taxpayers' losses in a few dozen swaps, but not their gains in thousands of others.

Moving to a cash-purchase system would almost certainly slow the agencies' acquisition of valuable lands and subject their work to congressional micromanagement. Congress has long been reluctant to fully fund its own land-conservation commitments; in recent years the budgets for the land-owning agencies have come under increasing pressure, reflecting a sentiment against acquisition of public lands—especially in the West, where most exchanges occur.

Moreover, the Forest Service and BLM have adopted significant reforms since 1998, prompted by newspaper reports exposing their failings. Though the GAO audit was commissioned in part to review the effectiveness of these changes, most of the truly terrible transactions cited by the auditors—including the aforementioned Nevada and Washington deals—occurred before they were adopted.

It is certainly true, as the auditors observe, that the agencies' clearer policies, better training and more stringent review of proposed deals can't guarantee perfect performance. But it is also true that the agencies deserve a better chance to show results.

Rep. George Miller, the California Democrat and public-lands advocate who asked for the GAO study, isn't persuaded that the programs ought to be scrapped, but he has called for a halt to new swaps until the agencies can show they have shaped up. There's little chance that Congress will adopt such a moratorium this session, but the agencies shouldn't take that as a reprieve. Having overhauled their procedures, they must now strive to regain the public's trust in the outcome.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIM ROEMER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2000

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, due to the birth of my daughter Grace Elizabeth, I was not present for rollcall votes 416 through 428 on July 19 and July 20, 2000. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall No. 416; "aye" on rollcall No. 417; "aye" on rollcall No. 418; "aye" on rollcall No. 419; "aye" on rollcall No. 420; "aye" on rollcall No.

421; "nay" on rollcall No. 422; "aye" on rollcall No. 423; "nay" on rollcall No. 424; "aye" on rollcall No. 425; "aye" on rollcall No. 426; "nay" on rollcall No. 427; and "nay" on rollcall No. 428. I also was not present on July 26, 2000 to vote on rollcall No. 422. I would have voted "nay."

IN HONOR OF COMMANDER GREGORY LAWRENCE

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2000

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to honor my dear friend, Commander Gregory Lawrence, a member of the Milpitas, California Police Department. I would like to congratulate Commander Lawrence on his retirement, September 8, 2000.

Commander Lawrence attended high school at William C. Overfelt High School in San Jose, California. Between the years of 1966 and 1969 he served as a Tank Commander in the U.S. Army. He continued his education at San Jose City College and San Jose State University. In 1979 he graduated from San Jose State with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Administration of Justice. In 1995 he earned a Masters Degree in Management from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. During his 29 year police career he attended the FBI National Academy, the POST sponsored Supervisory Leadership Institute and Command College.

Commander Lawrence began his career with the Milpitas Police Department on June 18, 1971. Through hard work and dedication he rose through the ranks and was promoted to Senior Officer in September 1973, Sergeant in July 1980, Lieutenant in October 1991, and Commander on September 15, 1998.

Commander Lawrence served as a supervisor in patrol, traffic, community relations, personnel, and investigations. He was instrumental in the development and implementation of the first Community Relations unit where he taught drug resistance classes at Ayer and Milpitas High Schools. He was also one of the department's first Crisis Negotiators. He was the first and only Sergeant to ride motorcycles as a duty assignment and researched, developed, and implemented the department's driver training and bicycle programs.

Commander Lawrence served his community extremely well and I cannot thank him enough for his unselfish dedication to the city of Milpitas. He has accomplished a lot in his 29 years with the police department and has set a great example for dozens of other police officers, friends, and members of the community for years to come.

Commander Lawrence deserves great commendation, and I would like to ask my fellow colleagues to join me in congratulating him on his retirement.

HONORING GOULD CONSTRUCTION

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2000

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize an exceptional group, Gould Construction, as well as its President Mark Gould, whom the Associated General Contractors of America honored with the Design-Build Award for 2000. The Associated General Contractors selected Gould Construction because of their dedication to Colorado and to its community.

Gould Construction succeeded in winning the Design-Build competition, which is new this year, of the 33,000 strong Associated General Contractors organization, because they demonstrated an ability to work under extreme circumstances. The selection criteria included difficulty of the job, project management, innovation, state-of-the-art advancement, sensitivity to the environment, client service, and contribution to the community. Gould Construction excelled in all these criteria when they worked for the city of Glenwood Springs to construct the Grizzly Creek raw water diversion. The Grizzly Creek water diversion dam was experiencing problems after close to a century of operation and after several natural disasters inhibited its functionality. Gould Construction worked in a challenging environment to restore the dam operation. The employees of Gould Construction worked nine weeks, suspended high above the narrow Roaring Fork Valley in the White River National Forest, to complete a plan that originally was scheduled for thirteen weeks.

Gould Construction worked endlessly under these treacherous conditions to complete this immense project; workers, food and construction material all had to be air lifted in to the site. The conditions were such that workers had to live in camps for the duration of each workweek. The nature of the project led to other challenges as well, Gould had to deal with environmental permits and had to operate to preserve the historical parts of the old dam; all in conjunction with creating a groundbreaking design that would deal with avalanches and rockfalls from the steep valley walls. Mark Gould, President of Gould Construction, said this about receiving the award "I'm thrilled for our employees, this award recognizes that we're doing important and innovative work nationally, not just in the Roaring Fork Valley. I think it will help us attract employees who come to the area seeking a challenge."

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious why Gould Construction was chosen as the Design-Build Award winner for 2000. Congress should extend a well-deserved recognition for the award and our thanks for their service and dedication to Colorado and to its outdoors.